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DOD FOR USDP EDELMAN
STATE FOR SCA/FO A/S BOUCHER AND DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A,
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EUR/RPM
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC PASS TO AHARRIMAN
OSD FOR KIMMITT
CENTCOM FOR CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD, JICCENT

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER II: US-AFGHAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
BILATERAL MEETINGS MARCH 13-14

REF: KABUL 804

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i., Richard Norland for reasons 1.4
(B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Reftel reported scenesetter for the March 13
U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership Plenary meeting. This
message provides points for March 13-14 bilateral meetings in
Kabul (in order of the meeting schedule).

FOREIGN MINISTER SPANTA

[1](#)2. (S) Under constant pressure from Karzai to deliver more,
FM Spanta should be reassured that the U.S. continues to
strongly support his efforts to put relations with Pakistan
on a realistic footing that will intensify cooperation
against terrorism. We should encourage him to make this his
major focus over the coming year, including making greater
effort to have frequent meetings and regular contact with his
GOP counterparts. Spanta is also focused on Iran. He
correctly understands that Iran can do far more to hurt us
(and the Afghans) than we can counter. Spanta may seek
reassurances that we would exclude Afghanistan from
obligations to enforce sanctions, much as we did for years
with Jordan or Turkey on Iraq. The GOA welcomes Iranian
economic assistance and investment, but shares our concerns
about intelligence activities and cultural dominance.

[1](#)3. (S) Points for Spanta include:

-- Enhanced Afghan-Pakistan cooperation is key to improving
regional and cross-border stability, as well as U.S.
security. U.S. willing to be helpful.

-- The U.S. supports the cross-border jirga initiative --
did anything come out of the two jirga commissions?

-- We hope that the Foreign Ministry will focus on this as a
top priority over the next year. You need a multi-faceted
approach to the problems. There is no silver bullet.

-- The U.S. shares Afghanistan's concerns about Iran. We understand the need for Afghanistan to have normal relations with its neighbors but will not tolerate Afghanistan being used as a platform for anti-coalition activities.

MINISTER OF DEFENSE WARDAK

¶4. (S) Minister of Defense Wardak deeply values the U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership, perhaps more than most. He was the only minister to attend an entire Strategic Partnership Working Group in preparation for the Plenary. He continues to emphasize the importance of the bilateral security relationship with the U.S., citing the U.S. treaty relationship with the Republic of Korea as a model. Wardak is not yet confident of NATO, due to what he sees as the complex decision-making, caveats, vacillation, and involvement of capitals in the NATO policy process.

¶5. (S) Wardak is committed to Afghan National Army (ANA) force development, including improving retention and reenlistment rates. Wardak's long-term vision for the ANA is to be capable of independently neutralizing any internal or external threat. He acknowledges the need for the GoA to take on ANA sustainability in the long-term but has said that during the transitional period the Afghan government will need to share the burden with Coalition forces. In a recent meeting with PDASD Shinn and the OSD delegation, Wardak proposed moving control of the Afghan Border Police back to the Ministry of Defense from the Ministry of Interior, where it has resided since the 2002 Bonn Conference limited the ANA to 70,000 personnel. However, others in the ANA leadership fear that incorporating ABP personnel into ANA ranks would

seriously dilute the professionalism and capability of the ANA. Wardak will welcome a discussion about Afghanistan's relations with its neighbors. In particular, he believes that the Pakistanis are playing a double game, but that if the U.S. is able to ensure Pakistan's sincerity, the Afghans will do everything they can to support a cooperative relationship.

¶6. (S) Points for Wardak:

-- The U.S. remains committed to a long-term partnership with Afghanistan. We are fully committed to supporting Afghanistan as it gradually takes on full responsibility for its own security.

-- Seek Minister Wardak's view how he sees the military situation developing over the next several months.

-- Seek Wardak's views of recent actions taken by Pakistan government, e.g. the arrest of Mullah Obaidullah and whether more can be done through the mechanism of the Tripartite Commission and other military-military channels to foster increased cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan in countering the insurgency.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR RASSOUL

¶7. (S) NSA Rassoul would benefit from hearing directly from USDEL about our interest in expanding Karzai's personal engagement on corruption, good governance and interagency cooperation, counter-narcotics and public outreach to take the initiative away from the Taliban. Rassoul says he is willing to try being less vocal about Pakistan's role in Afghanistan in order to give a chance for other pressure to work. He says Pakistan sees a stable Afghanistan as a threat, that Afghans are willing to persuade them otherwise, but merely extending Pakistani influence into Afghanistan is unacceptable.

¶8. (S) Key messages to Rassoul:

-- Americans and Congress are expecting more progress on tackling corruption, good governance, and counter-narcotics. \$10.2 billion supplemental is a vote of confidence but we need to see early results.

-- On jirgas, Rassoul and senior GOA leadership needs to be more proactive in reaching out to Pakistani counterparts. Explore his view of next steps now that the two Commissions have agreed to meet March 10.

-- Rassoul does not believe the problem with Pakistan is a border issue, but one of sanctuaries, training camps, and madrassas. Convey strong U.S. support for closing down these sources of terrorism, working with Pakistan. Seek Rassoul's views on more effective approaches to Pakistan and how to make greater use of Karzai as the most effective public spokesman for countering the insurgency.

PRESIDENT KARZAI

19. (S) Your meeting with President Karzai will be an opportunity to assure him of our commitment to the U.S.-Afghan partnership and ask for more vigorous leadership on a range of issues. Reassure him that we continue to be willing to help facilitate full Pakistani participation in the cross-border jirgas and more effective action against Taliban leadership in Quetta and Peshawar. Intel supports Karzai's conviction that the North Waziristan agreement is not working, and he may want to know what we plan to do about it. Karzai is also concerned about controversial legislation, already adopted in both houses of

Parliament and awaiting his signature, that would grant a blanket amnesty to warlords and human rights abusers for crimes committed during the Anti-Soviet jihad and afterwards.

Karzai is maneuvering to kill the measure for "Afghan" reasons, without appearing as a puppet of international human rights advocates. With the change of seasons also comes uncertainty surrounding the anticipated Taliban spring offensive which has already started. Its intensity, as well as the Afghan and coalition response, will shape the political environment in the coming months. Karzai is all for strong military action but remains concerned about civilian casualties.

10. (S) The meeting with President Karzai will be a good opportunity to convey the following messages:

-- The U.S. and ISAF are committed to securing the South. The GOA needs to be seen out front in consolidating gains through active reconstruction and development. (He'll tell us donors need to work faster.)

-- Getting the auxiliary police program up and running has been a positive step in improving security without simply resorting entirely to militias. We are committed to working with the MOI to expand the program rapidly to the East, but need to be careful to ensure that auxiliary police are recruited individually and thoroughly vetted.

-- Karzai must show greater leadership in fighting corruption, much of which is related to drug trafficking, that is poisoning efforts to build a capable and credible governance system. Corruption is fast becoming systematic at the central and provincial levels. This is the most important issue for building confidence in the government. Karzai should use his authority to remove corrupt officials from office (including his drug-running brother Ahmad Wali Karzai, in Kandahar) through a transparent process, support his Attorney General to imprison and remove ineffective and corrupt provincial and district officials using proper legal procedures, act upon the recommendations of Supreme Court Chief Justice Azimi's forthcoming anti-corruption report, push his ministers to include anti-corruption efforts in their strategic plans, and urge ratification of the UN Convention on Corruption (a London Compact Benchmark).

-- Police reform is prerequisite to persuading Afghans to look to the central government as the sole provider of security and guarantor of justice. Police are the face of the GOA at the local level. It is critically important to continue appointing to leadership positions police officers who are professional, competent, active, and not corrupt.

-- The GOA has to take much stronger action against poppy cultivation and the traffickers who profit from it. Helmand is headed for another record crop, which risks negating the gains made in other parts of the country. In Helmand in particular, the President, the Governor, and the police must take much stronger action to eradicate the crop that has already been planted and arrest major traffickers in the province.

-- Karzai should reach out more to the public across Afghanistan. He should encourage his Ministers to do the same, as well as to take a stronger leadership role in ministerial-provincial coordination. The government needs to show its presence and extend its reach throughout the country, particularly cracking down on corruption and demonstrating success on development and police recruitment.

-- We understand the delicate political issues raised by the controversial amnesty legislation. The U.S. continues to support the National Action Plan on Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation.

BREAKFAST WITH COMISAF GENERAL MCNEILL

11. (S) General McNeill assumed command of ISAF X on February 14. He had previously served in Afghanistan as the head of the operational command at Command Joint Task Force 180 (now CJTF-82). Thus, he understands the situation on the ground and has strong personal relationships with senior Afghan leaders. General McNeill's "commander's intent" for the upcoming campaign season is to retain the initiative. This is not intended to result in large-scale military engagements, but rather it will be a series of more focused efforts. The primary elements will consist of targeting insurgent leaders, engagement with local key leaders, development and reconstruction, and ensuring freedom of movement for ISAF and Afghan forces. ISAF X Headquarters faces challenges of fully integrating and staffing the disparate NATO elements. This is compounded by the fact that for the first time in ISAF history it is a composite headquarters, and still faced with some growing pains.

12. (S) Points for General McNeill:

-- Seek General McNeill's view of how the military situation will develop over the next several months.

-- Are NATO and Coalition forces, to include the U.S., sufficient to counter the insurgency this year?

-- How does he see cooperation with the international community in Kabul in support of security objectives?

-- Seek his thoughts on the Tripartite Commission (AFG-PAK-NATO mil-mil forum), and how he envisions further developing it to strengthen the trilateral relationship and improve AFG-PAK cross-border coordination.

UNSRSG KOENIGS

13. (S) Your meeting with Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General (SRSG) Tom Koenigs will be an opportunity to affirm UNAMA's important role and accomplishments in Afghanistan, as well as to encourage UNAMA to find ways to improve its communication with EU and NATO opinion leaders. Despite doubts expressed by the French and some others, Koenigs is doing a pretty good job. As co-chair

along with the Afghan Government of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), which oversees implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, UNAMA has generated real activity on the ground in support of a process that must be led in Kabul to be effective. Koenigs brings the right donors and Afghan parties together to identify problems, remove roadblocks, and develop agreed strategies on how to make progress in key sectors. Koenigs' successful role as SRSG and as JCMB co-chair has affirmed Karzai's preeminent role and facilitated a smooth Afghan/international effort on the ground. Points for Koenigs:

-- Ask SRSG Koenigs for UNAMA's general assessment of the situation on the ground, Pakistan, governance and corruption, and the appropriate role of the UN in Afghanistan.

-- Given its efforts and accomplishments in Afghanistan, how can UNAMA work more on the information campaign, especially with NATO and EU opinion leaders?

-- SRSG Koenigs will want to hear your views on Pakistan, jirgas, and President Karzai.

NORLAND